

Architectural Remains  
Unit B, Sub-Unit 62 (S 6)  
Jamestown Island, Virginia

*James City Co.*

HABS NO. VA-28

HABS  
VA

48. JAM,

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. VA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Philip N. Stern, District Officer  
21 Law Building, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS  
UNIT B, SUB-UNIT 62 (S 6)  
JAMESTOWN ISLAND  
COLONIAL NATIONAL MONUMENT  
VIRGINIA

Owner: National Park Service.

Date of Erection: 17th Century.

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Unknown.

Present Condition: Foundation only; recovered, 1935.

Number of Stories: Unknown.

Materials of Construction: Brick.

Other Existing Records: ~~Virginia Magazine of History and~~  
~~Biography~~. July, 1935.

Additional Data: See following pages.

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Narrative Report

Before the acquisition of the Jamestown Island property by the United States Government this foundation in Unit B, sub-unit 62 had been excavated in its eastern part, and the brickwork there had been exposed to the weather for a long time. This old excavation explains why the fireplace and brick steps at the east end of the building are in a bad state of repair.

Between September 1st and October 29th, 1934, the remainder of the foundation was excavated by Assistant Archaeologist Zaharox, in charge of the Jamestown project for the National Park Service.

In the debris of the foundation were found several water-table bricks, a gauged voussoir from a flat arch and fragments of old wrought iron hardware. These objects have been drawn on the Historic American Buildings Survey sheets accompanying this narrative and descriptive report.

Description of the Remains

The year 1624 marked a new era in the development of Jamestown. A more substantial type of building began to be erected in that section of the city known in this year as "The New Towne". This foundation is one of those buildings. It lies back from the shore of the island about one hundred and forty feet. The long sides of the building are almost parallel with the river bank. About two hundred feet to the west of the foundation is the James River ferry pier. Beyond this is the enclosure of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

The name given the foundation in this report, "Architectural Remains, Unit B, Sub-unit 62 (S 6)", is of a temporary character and will be replaced later, if possible, by the proper historical designation. When it is realized, however, that there have been found no patents or surveys for this area of the New Town, this foundation may never be identified and the former owners may never be known.

The two fireplaces and the brick stairway indicate that the foundation was the basement or cellar of the building. The basement is rectangular in shape, measuring forty-eight and a half feet long by twenty-one and a half feet wide. Across the middle of the foundation are probably the remains of the footings or last brick courses of two cross partitions. The fireplaces are situated in the center of each end of the cellar. The brick steps adjoin the east fireplace and lead to the outside.

Beyond the rectangle of the foundation are the fragmentary remains of two brick walls. These are situated parallel to the eastern part of the main north wall of the basement and may have been an addition to the main building. They are but two brick courses high and are about three feet above the bottom brick course of the foundation or cellar walls.

The brick cellar walls are only 3'-3" high in their highest part, showing that the remaining three feet necessary for headroom in the cellar has been removed. The walls average eighteen inches in width and are laid up in English bond on both exterior and interior sides. Closers are used at the outside corners of the foundation walls and on the west fireplace.

The hearths of the two fireplaces are slightly higher than the present dirt floor and the bottom of the main walls. Whether the original floor was at the level of the hearths is not known. Dirt floors have been found in other Jamestown buildings like the eastern section of the first brick state house, and the Country House in the A.P.V.A. enclosure. Both fireplaces in this foundation are practically the same size, but the fireplace at the east end has almost entirely been destroyed, the back and one side having disappeared. The hearth bricks in this fireplace are much smaller than the typical brick from this foundation. The west fireplace has traces of spalling by fire at the back and the brick has crumbled badly there.

Very little remains of the brick steps leading from the basement to the outside ground. They are four and a half feet wide and have a riser of 9". The lowest riser is flush with the inside face of the main east wall. The tread is 10 1/2" wide. In a side of the stair are two housings in which wood nosings used to fit.

### Description of Architectural Fragments.

Hardware: The most interesting fragment of hardware recovered is an ornamental latch bar of wrought iron, almost identical with one found in Foundation B-89 & 97, called the first brick state house in Virginia. It is interesting to compare the two latches: one may be found on sheet #3 of this report and the other on sheet #12 of the report on Foundation B-89 & 97. The latch bar from B-62 is slightly shorter than the one from the other foundation. The ball-and-spear end has been partly broken, but otherwise the mouldings and notches and ornamental diagonal grooves are practically identical.

The wedge or V-shaped padlock is very similar to, but smaller than, one found in Foundation B-59 & 73, ~~also called B,~~ near the A.P.V.A. enclosure. Both padlocks have ridges on their faces and sides. The key hole is on that face which has the rounded (as opposed to the flat) ridge.

Brick and Mortar: Undoubtedly the most important discovery was the finding of a straight arch brick or gauged voussoir. The brick tapers from 2" to 2 1/4" in thickness, the overall length is 6 1/4" and the depth from face to back is 4 1/8". The mortar attached to the brick shows a joint 1/16" wide. Near the top of the voussoir is a false joint 1/16" wide and 1/4" deep. Since no other voussoir was recovered and placed in the field laboratory, the brick is a very slender piece of evidence on which to base the conclusion that the original building was brick. However, the eighteen gauged watertable bricks from this foundation strongly indicate a brick building. The watertable bricks are chamfered and at a 40 degree angle to the horizontal. There are both headers and stretchers. The headers average 2 1/4" by 4" by 7 1/4" in size, the stretchers average 2 1/4" by 4 1/8" by 8". The width of the joint as shown on the mortar attached to the watertable bricks is the same as the typical joint of the foundation: 3/4". The joint, however, is tooled, having a straight groove down the center.

The average joint, 3/4" wide, is tooled on the interior walls of the basement, the mortar sloping back from the lower corner of the upper brick. On the exterior walls the joints are poorly done, some having been tooled like those of the inside walls, but most of them never having been cleaned with a trowel. The mortar has been allowed to spread over the face of the bricks probably because the bricks are below the ground level.

Roofing Tiles: There are two types of roof tile fragments from this foundation -- the flat, "plain" or "shingle" tile, and the pantile. Both types have been found in other foundations at Jamestown.

The plain tile are  $6 \frac{1}{4}$ " wide and  $\frac{13}{16}$ " thick. The length is unknown as no plain tile at Jamestown has yet been pieced together whole. The width and thickness conforms to the tile used in England in the sixteenth century--statute 13, Elizabeth, 1571, giving the dimensions of plain tile as  $10 \frac{1}{2}$ " by  $6 \frac{1}{4}$ " by  $\frac{5}{8}$ ".

The fragment of pantile found is like a pantile pieced together lately from Foundation B-89 & 97, called the first brick state house in Virginia. This is moulded in a shape resembling the letter S. Moxon in his "Mechanic Exercises" gives us a description of the pantile. He writes of them thus: "Pan-Tiles, being about thirteen inches long, with a Nob or Button to hang on the Laths, are hollow or circular breadthways, being eight inches in breadth, and about half an inch in thickness, or somewhat more. The best sort of these are brought from Holland into England and are called Flemish Pan-Tiles, we having such Tiles made here in England, but not so good."

[Extracts from report, by Henry C. Forman, Assistant Architect, in the files of the National Park Service. Edited by Thomas T. Waterman, Assistant Architect.]